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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3819th meeting of the Security Council, held on 25 September 1997, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council met on 25 September 1997, at the level of Foreign Ministers, to consider the need for a concerted international effort to promote peace and security in Africa.

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to Africa in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council also reaffirms the principles of political independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all Member States.

"The Security Council notes that African States have made significant strides towards democratization, economic reform, and respect for and protection of human rights in order to achieve political stability, peace, and sustainable economic and social development.

"Despite these positive developments, the Security Council remains gravely concerned by the number and intensity of armed conflicts on the continent. Such conflicts threaten regional peace, cause massive human dislocation and suffering, perpetuate instability and divert resources from long-term development.

"The Security Council reaffirms the responsibility of all Member States to settle their international disputes by peaceful means and its own primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council welcomes the important contributions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), including through its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution, as well as those of subregional arrangements, in preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa, and looks forward to a stronger partnership between the United Nations and the OAU, as well as subregional arrangements, in conformity with

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council supports enhancement of the capacity of African States to contribute to peacekeeping operations, including in Africa, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Council highlights the important contribution of the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty to international peace and security.

"The Security Council fully supports the engagement of the United Nations in Africa through its diplomatic, peacekeeping, humanitarian, economic development and other activities, which are often undertaken in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. The United Nations makes an important contribution to the efforts of Africa to construct a future of peace, democracy, justice, and prosperity. The Council underlines the importance of the commitment of the United Nations through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations to assist the efforts of African States to address humanitarian and refugee crises in accordance with international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council considers that the challenges in Africa demand a more comprehensive response. To this end, the Council requests the Secretary-General to submit a report containing concrete recommendations to the Council by February 1998 regarding the sources of conflict in Africa, ways to prevent and address these conflicts, and how to lay the foundation for durable peace and economic growth following their resolution. Because the scope of this report may extend beyond the purview of the Security Council, the Council invites the Secretary-General to submit his report to the General Assembly and other relevant bodies of the United Nations for action as they deem appropriate, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council affirms its intention to review promptly the recommendations of the Secretary-General with a view to taking steps consistent with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations."